

Exhibit 1

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HEADLINE: 'Indian Muslims capable of self-defense'

BYLINE: By Ezzuddin Hafez, Special to Arab News

ARAB NEWS

BODY:

JEDDAH, Feb. 12--"It is true that Indian Muslims are oppressed. But what I am at a loss to understand is the utter failure of about 100 million Muslims in defending their places of worship." This was the reaction of Adel Batterji, president of Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), when asked to comment on the recent razing of the historic Babri Mosque in India.

"I think that Indian Muslims do not need our help, either material or moral, because they are capable of defending and protecting their mosques and their religion. I think what they need is more faith in their religion and to gather strictly around Islam."

The U.S.-based charitable organization started functioning nearly a decade ago in Afghanistan. It started with individual efforts, and has developed now into a full-fledged establishment with branches in different parts of the world. In the meantime, BIF carries out charitable and relief works in Sudan, Bangladesh and Bosnia.

It was formally registered recently as an internationally recognized welfare association in Illinois, Chicago, and Ottawa, Canada, but it actually operates from Jeddah. "The foundation aims to serve Muslims all over the world where they need help" Batterji said. "Its services cover health, education and economic development. And while carrying out relief works we also propagate the divine message of Islam which is considered as our main objective."

Millions of needy Muslims benefited from BIF which spent over the past two years SR787,500 on Zakat Al-Fitr (charity) on 112,500 people. It supplied food for breaking fast during Ramadan to 85,201 Muslims at a cost of SR1.24 million and distributed clothing, tents and blankets worth SR2.87 million.

The foundation established two schools, three big hospitals, 12 medical centers, two leprosy centers and two veterinary clinics. It implemented five agricultural projects covering 7,106 acres.

Its Dawa (propagation) efforts were successful in bringing hundreds of non-Muslims to the fold of Islam. In the field of humanitarian work, it distributed relief supplies worth SR609,067.

On cooperation with international relief agencies, Batterji said, "We accept

their support if we find that it can help the Muslims and serve their interests, and if not, we do not accept their support". "In Afghanistan we cooperated with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) by helping them to cultivate

PAGE 2

Moneyclips February 13, 1993

wheat, and we used their tractors too".

Talking about the distribution of relief supplies, Batterji said: "We have offices in some parts of the Islamic world and we put certain priorities for work. We work out a plan and a budget in the light of those priorities, keeping in mind the most needed areas. Until now our services are directed to Muslims only, although we have schemes to help non-Muslims under certain conditions, like what is happening now in Bosnia".

Batterji said the foundation draws its energy from the moral and material support of the public. "In the beginning BIF depended on some eight to 10 prominent businessmen who provided 80 percent of its budget. We've worked hard to change this situation, and we have succeeded. Now the major portion of our funds is donated by the public. Actually, it is a healthy sign that all Muslims share the divine reward, and it minimizes the danger of depending on certain people."

He said BIF's efforts to secure a permanent source of income were successful. "We achieved this by establishing endowments which is an Islamic custom which appears to be vanishing. So we have revived an important Islamic custom and at the same time we have secured the means of income".

The organization now concentrates its efforts in four main areas: Afghanistan, Sudan, Bangladesh and Bosnia, and it sets up projects such as hospitals, schools, mosques and institutes for preparing preachers. "We don't give food or money directly" Batterji said. "We prefer to help people by establishing permanent projects. People may forget food and money we supplied but they will remember those projects always. In this way Islam will live in their minds", Batterji added. For Somalia the foundation has a big program ready for implementation.

Asked about media reports on Bosnian girls seeking Muslim husbands in order to escape from Serbian atrocities, he said: "The foundation has nothing to do with this matter, and I think the media had overplayed it, and I am suspicious about their intentions as they were detracting the attention of the public from the terrible plight of Bosnians by highlighting this silly issue. A lot of people came here and did incessant calls asking about the procedures for getting married to these girls. We told them that the same problem exists in Somalia. Many Somali women need men to save them and take care of them, and we asked them why don't you marry a Somali girl. The result was that they all disappeared and never came back to talk this rubbish. It is awful that when part of the Muslim world lives in extremely tragic situations, people make fun of it under the guise of service to Islam".

In addition to his duties, Batterji finds time to do some writings. He recently published a book entitled "Water is the Future War" in which he foresees a possible war between Israel and Arabs on water resources.

"The Jews have taken up the issue of water resources in the Middle East long

ago since they held a conference in Switzerland" Batterji said.

"They know the importance of water resources and we have to be aware of what they have been planning for. Otherwise we will be in great danger. This subject has been dealt with in detail in the book with supporting maps and evidences".

Batterji has written another book, which is under print, on Afghan jihad

□ PAGE 3

Moneyclips February 13, 1993

disclosing many unknown aspects about the war in Afghanistan.

Batterji said all the charitable institutions, including BIF, need moral and material support of the people. "I urge my Muslim brethren to volunteer their services for the implementation of our projects. Muslims should be more conscious about their causes and should mobilize their resources to face the challenges, because the enemies are out to destroy Islam. So we have to be one hand and defend ourselves, otherwise no one would do it."

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batterjee wrote afghan jihad book.txt

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